



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

I have been wondering who are the greatest gainers from the art decorations in schools—the children, their teachers or members of the women's clubs, who, perhaps, set the ball in motion? The benefit is not all on one side certainly. Teachers have been compelled to brush up in art matters in order to answer the questions of pupils. And are not club-women enabled to talk learnedly of Della Robbia, Thorwaldsen, Correggio and a score of other unpronounceable foreigners, greatly to the admiration and wonder of some of us ordinary people? The beauty of it all is that they are entirely safe from correction, be their mistakes ever so serious.

I think the most significant sign of the times, and the most auspicious, is the fad, if you like, for schoolroom decoration. It represents the line of cleavage between the commercialism of the past and the culture and refinement of the future. It is public recognition that beauty and sentiment have a practical value in the development of mankind, and should have a large place in education. It is noticeable, too, that in all this worship of the old masters and of the beautiful, cultivation of the true American spirit is not neglected. For we find in nearly every schoolroom the Madonna and Child, indicative of the religious life of the nation, and the calm features of the immortal Washington, that great exponent of our political faith.

CHARLES PIERCE BURTON.

Aurora, Illinois.



LIFE THE ACCUSER

If we may take the awards of the jury in this year's exhibit at the Carnegie Galleries as fairly illustrative, and I believe that we may, it would seem that the standards which are the basis of what is generally accepted as authoritative opinion in current art, are not such as will recommend themselves to people who think of human life as significant in itself and outside of its possibilities as an artistic effect.

Undoubtedly there are excellencies in the five paintings officially distinguished that are hardly suggested in the black and white reproductions shown in the December number of BRUSH AND PENCIL. Yet, leaving Mr. Tryon's landscape and Mr. Weir's "Roses" out of the discussion, as they are not related to the question here raised, the other three pictures, in each of which the human figure is the prominent feature of the composition, give but the slightest impression of those things in life which lie under its textures and its dress.

I think that the young lady in Childe Hassam's "The Sea" would, if she could speak, say something like this: "Oh, Mr. Painter! pray why do you treat me so? It is very nice, so far as it goes, this delicious shimmering, out-of-door ('plein air,' I think you call it) effect; but you have forgotten that I sometimes think and am quite in the

habit of indulging in some kind of feeling, and I now feel very angry with you, sir, for taking me so little seriously and as if I were only an effect." "Ah! but a charming one," the painter might urge in defense. Yet after all, human life, even in frills and by the sea, is felt by most of us, as something more than a thing for the air and the light to play with, and may quite reasonably, I think, protest to the art that takes but little or no account of its other significance and adaptabilities, "Why do you treat me so?"

The two figures in "The Window Seat," and the single one of "The Shepherd" equally fail in human interest. While intelligently disposed as mass and line, and skillfully painted as objects, as representations of life in any other than its purely superficial aspects, they have no claim to be distinguished.

Let me be understood. I do not question the rightness of these awards from the point of view taken, but rather the rightness of this point of view. The question here raised is this: Has not human life, when treated in the foreground of a composition, not frankly decorative, but so conceived that we cannot escape a suggestion of what it means—as human life—has it not some claims to make of art that are not admitted in such judgments? Admitted, it seems to me inconceivable that there should not have been some pictures among those entering this competition more worthy of distinction than these selected.

With all respect, then, to the qualities of "The Sea," and to the skill with which "The Window Seat" and "The Shepherd" are painted, I submit that their interest is almost purely objective, and that in his conception of the life that figures in them as the chief feature of their composition, the artist's thought has not penetrated beyond its externals of form and textures and color. It may be answered that these things are what life primarily means to the painter, and if by this it is meant that he must arrive at a measurable degree of mastery of these things first, I will reply—True. But if it is meant that life when it sits to the painter must first be stripped of all its high dignities of thought and feeling and become a series of painter's models, then I say, even though these models be disposed and adapted to their environment with the finest art, that the answer is not a sufficient one.

Let us rehabilitate life in our conception of its meaning for the artist, or how may we hope that our art will live, leaving out of the life it treats all in it that is enduring? Let us think somewhat less seriously of its color and dress and shape, and somewhat more seriously of some thought or feeling to be manifested by them. We may not hope until we do that our pictures will make a place for themselves in those circles where life is understood as something more than an arrangement.

HENRY C. PAYNE.

Anamosa, Iowa, December 13, 1898.